

TO:

Chair Scott Dibble, Senate Transportation Finance & Policy Committee
Chair Kari Dziedzic, Senate and Local Government and Veterans Committee

April 15, 2024

We are a coalition of elected and appointed leaders along the Blue Line Extension corridor in support of establishing and funding the Blue Line Extension antidisplacement community prosperity program. (HF 4683 Agbaje and SF 4719 Dibble).

The Blue Line Extension Light Rail project will bring transformational investment to communities along this corridor from Brooklyn Park, through Crystal and Robbinsdale and North Minneapolis. Large-scale public investments like the Blue Line Extension can accelerate patterns of residential and economic displacement. We must work together to ensure this investment benefits corridor residents and businesses, prevents displacement, builds community wealth, and meaningfully addresses decades-long patterns of disinvestment.

In 2020 Hennepin County and the Metropolitan Council convened an Anti-Displacement Working Group (ADWG), with contracted facilitation by the University of Minnesota's Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA), to develop a response to broad community concerns about the risk for residential, economic, and cultural displacement pressures related to the light rail investment. The ADWG was made up of community stakeholders and government partners. They met regularly over 18 months and released an extensive study and recommended strategies to prevent displacement and maximize benefits to existing residents and businesses.

HF 4683 Agbaje and SF 4719 Dibble establishes an antidisplacement community prosperity program to help implement the ADWG strategies, including: preserving and enhancing affordable housing, small business support, job training and placement, economic vitality, community ownership and development, and other measures to benefit people in the corridor today and for generations to come. The bill will provide at least \$10 million per year starting in 2024 through 2030 to leverage equal local and philanthropic funding to maximize the investment in these strategies.

The Blue Line Extension will provide better transit service to communities with some of the highest rates in the state for households without regular access to a personal vehicle and who rely on transit to meet daily needs. We must collectively work together achieve the implementation of the antidisplacement strategies and ensure community prosperity in stride with this massive investment in the corridor.

Signed:

Bill Blonigan, Mayor, Robbinsdale

Reva Chamblis, Council Member District 2, Met Council

Jeremiah Ellison, Councilmember Ward 5, Minneapolis

Irene Fernando, Commissioner District 2, Hennepin County

Jacob Frey, Mayor, Minneapolis

Jeff Lunde, Commissioner District 1, Hennepin County

Mia Parisian, Councilmember Ward 3, Robbinsdale

Hollies Winston, Mayor, Brooklyn Park